

D. W. Post, Toronto, Ont.

September 30, 1893.

Interviewed by Jm. Wakeham & R. Rathbun.

occupation

Extensive dealer in fresh fish. Has freezing and storage establishment.

*whitefish
L. trout*

Not over 5 tons each of whitefish and salmon trout are brought into Toronto and Hamilton a year, caught in the western part of Lake Ontario.

*Fishermen
Rigs
etc.*

There are 2 fishermen on Toronto Island who have always depended on fishing---William Ward and Mr. Montgomery.

The next nearest fishermen to the east are at Frenchman's Bay, about 10 miles from Toronto. He thinks there is one boat at this place, with 3 or 4 men.

Some small rigs fish off Whitby a part of the time. They do not keep at it steady and make only small catches.

On Credit River, west of Toronto, a man

by the name of Nourse keeps a hotel and carries on fishing. Sea salmon used to run up this river, but have not for 15 or 20 years.

Oakville, about 30 miles west of Toronto, had rather an extensive fishery for cisco about 3 or 4 years ago, but knows nothing about its condition at present.

Burlington Beach is next, about 5 miles from Hamilton.

The fishery overseer of this district, Mr. Hallowell, lives at Eglinton, 2 miles beyond the city limits of Toronto.

The whitefish (amount above mentioned) are taken mostly off Toronto Island in seines, which are hauled over an area reaching about 1/2 mile off shore. Each seine measures about 200 yards long; these are not large seines. The law defines the size of mesh in the wings at not less than 4 inches.

The whitefish are caught only in June and beginning of July. Too many small ones are

Salmon

Fishing places

Overseer

w.f.

Seines

w.f. season size

taken. They run from 1 to 3 pounds in weight and sometimes get them weighing less than 1 lb.

C. F.

Spawning

Has no information about the spawning of the whitefish here. There are no regular breeding places here so far as he knows.

Cause of decrease

Any decrease of whitefish could not be ascribed to the presence of many steamers, as the fishing ^{grounds} are not disturbed by steamers, which run inside, not outside, the island.

Gills

off Niagara River

Sigs

Have tried gill nets for whitefish in this locality, but without success. Ending some 6 or 8 years ago, there was a fishery for white fish off the mouth of the Niagara River, which had continued for 3 or 4 years, with some success. They got whitefish weighing from 2 to 5 pounds apiece, but nothing is done now.

off Toronto general w. f.

There has been very poor fishing for white fish about Toronto for 20 years past. Thirty years ago and previously the local Toronto market was supplied by fishermen on Toronto Island. There were 6 or 8 regular parties

located there, each consisting of 4 to 6 men. They used seines principally. When the fish became scarce here most of the men went to Georgian Bay. They used to bring their fish into a little market near where Mr. Post's present establishment is located.

decrease There has apparently been more decrease in this district than elsewhere in Lake Ontario on the Canadian side. This may not, however, be entirely true.

gills The gill nets for whitefish formerly used here had a mesh of 4 to 4 1/2 inches.

Cause of decrease The principal cause of the decrease of whitefish has been the catching of too many fish of immature size. Thinks no whitefish under 2 1/2 pounds spawn. They have always caught great numbers of small whitefish. Increased navigation may have had something to do with it, but he does not think so.

Georgian Bay (They are also catching too many small fish in Georgian Bay. Whitefish especially

are gradually thinning out all the time; salmon trout to a less extent. He is receiving much smaller fish now from Georgian Bay than he used to.)

gill

The gill nets for whitefish in Lake Ontario should have a mesh of 5 inches or thereabouts. They now use 4 inches to a large extent.

35 years ago they were using 5 $1/4$ inch mesh gill nets for whitefish and salmon trout, which were very plentiful at that time. 20 years ago the size was lowered to 5 inch; and since then it has been reduced to 4 $1/2$ and 4 $1/4$ inches. The small whitefish they are now getting are soft, will not carry so well, and are not so marketable. There is more value for everybody in large and mature fish.

Small w.f.

The Buffalo Fish Co. say they have lately been getting more small whitefish than they can readily handle.

*Georgian Bay
m.b.*

Thirty-five years ago, whitefish in Georgian Bay would average about 4 1/2 pounds apiece. Trout ranged chiefly from 3 to 6 pounds, and some would go up to 50 pounds. Now whitefish average about 2 1/2 pounds, apiece, and many trout are caught under 1 pound. Many more small trout are caught now than formerly. Now market large quantities which the fishermen would have thrown away before. The trout can hold their own, however, better than the whitefish.

nets.

Used to catch their fish (Georgian Bay) in a coarse net made of No. 35 twine. Now use about No. 60 twine, and three times the quantity of net to catch the same amount of fish. 30 to 35 years ago they employed 4,000 yards of gill net, of 5 1/4 inch mesh, to a boat. Now they use over 8,000 yards to each of the small boats or sail boats, the tugs employing more. The mesh is now about 4 1/2 inches. While using more than double the

quantity of netting, each boat does not average as many fish, but there are more boats engaged in the business.

*Georgian Bay
W. B.
L. Trout*

Georgian Bay has always been and still is the place where whitefish and salmon trout abound most, supply more of those fish than any other part of the Great Lakes of the same size.

The bulk of the Georgian Bay whitefish and trout are sent direct to the Buffalo Fish Co.

*L. Ontario
Trout*

Not over 5 tons of salmon trout are caught annually in the western part of Lake Ontario, between Whitby and the Niagara. Of this quantity the fishermen on Toronto Island may obtain 3 or 4 tons.

gills

From 3,000 to 4,000 yards of gill nets are used by the 2 men on Toronto Island. They are set sometimes as far off the island as 8 to 10 miles, but there are so few fish they have little encouragement to continue the business.

*Georgian Bay,
gills*

(In Georgian Bay, each boat has from 16,000 to 20,000 yards of gill nets, worked probably in 4 gangs, 2 or 3 of which only may be in the water at once).

*L. Ontario
w. b.
trout
season*

They begin fishing for whitefish and trout off Toronto in October. They are obliged to intermit November, but fish more or less all winter as the weather permits. The lake does not freeze over here. He thinks they set generally in 6 to 10 fathoms.

Depth

Thinks if they fished in deeper water, and pushed their work more energetically, they might get more fish, but they do not seem disposed to do so.

nets

They use principally 5 and 6 inch mesh for trout (which average larger here than in Georgian Bay), and 4 inch mesh for whitefish.

In Lake Ontario the gill net mesh for whitefish should be 4 $1/2$ inches, and for trout 5 $1/2$ to 6 inches.

Upper Lakes,
nets, n.b.
Front

In the upper lakes where the two species are taken together, the smallest limit of mesh for gill nets should be 5 inches.

Cisco
gills.

Cisco are taken 3 to 8 miles off shore, in gill nets having 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch mesh.

The bulk of the cisco smoked are about 6 inches long. They also catch some larger ones weighing $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ pound, and have brought them in from off Niagara weighing over 1 pound, but the latter, like the whitefish, have run out in that region. Thinks the larger cisco may be a distinct species.

They are not now catching over $\frac{1}{3}$ as many cisco to a boat as they were 5 years ago, and there are not so many fishing for them, they have become so scarce. This statement applies to the entire region from Toronto to Hamilton.

mesh.

Could not say what should be the proper mesh for taking cisco. Thinks, however, that it could not be increased above 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

*Cisco**Season**Locality*

All of the cisco he knows of come from Lake Ontario. They are fished for from September to March or April. They occur at other times of the year, but cannot be handled in warm weather. Once in a while, however, a few are brought in. Does not know of their being caught below Port Hope in Canada, but they used to take them extensively in the region about Cape Vincent.

Apparatus

Not over 50 boats fish for cisco between Port Hope and Hamilton, and not all of these regularly. They use about 4,000 to 6,000 yards of gill net to each boat. These nets are 4 1/2 to 5 feet deep when set.

*Gills**Pike*

Gill nets are not employed for catching other fish than the above, except that a few short ones are set in bays and inlets for pike. Their use for this purpose has been prohibited around Toronto Island in order to preserve this species there for sport fishing. This is a

fish which does more harm to other species than any other fish.

*Hoop.
Bullheads*

No hoop nets are set in this region, and no quantity of bullheads are taken about here. There is only a slight local demand for them, and no demand here from the American side.

*Sport.
Perch.
Pike
B. Bass*

They do no sport fishing here except for perch and pike in the bay at the east end of Toronto Island. There are very few black bass about here, but some are caught in Burlington Bay at Hamilton.

*Gills.
Herring*

The gill net mesh for blue back herring should be not over 2 $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. A 3 $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch mesh would let all the herring through, and might catch some small whitefish. They are a little larger fish than the average cisco. The present law prescribes a 2 $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. mesh. These herring are about the same in all the lakes, and the mesh should, therefore, be alike in all.

Herring
They are catching a great many herring still. The catch last year was an average one

Sturgeon
Sturgeon are not taken about Toronto. The demand is very light.

Pounds
The use of pounds is all right in case the mesh is large enough. Should measure not less than 4 inches in the pot for whitefish and trout. For herring it should be smaller, about 2 1/2 inches.

In most places in Lake Erie they fish only for herring.

There are now some pound nets in the upper part of Georgian Bay, and they are trying to get some more in.

Pounds are destructive to whitefish, as they are taking too many small fish. A large quantity received in Buffalo this summer were condemned as being too small and not marketable. They came from above Kilarny, on Georgian Bay. The law calls for a 4 inch mesh, but it has not

been enforced, and a smaller mesh is generally used.

*Give fishermen
year's
notice of
change* Advised Mr. Wilmot, when a change had been decided on, to give the fishermen due notice a year in advance. At the expiration of that time he would have men go around and take possession of all the nets having less than the legal size mesh. The fishermen should then be allowed something for these nets, as they last 2 or 3 years. and it would not be just to make them suffer much pecuniary loss.

Tariff Thinks fish should be admitted free both into Canada and the United States, and spoke at some length upon the workings of the McKinley bill. An attempt has been made at Sandusky to collect duty on fish caught in "American" twine on the Canada side.

Eels. Eels are not very abundant about here. Only a few are brought in here, and the sales are limited. They range in weight from 1/2

pound to 3 pounds.

Mesh
The small mesh is doing much harm at Port Arthur, Lake Superior.

Effect of restrictions
More rigid restrictions would work some hardships upon the fishermen for a year or two, but subsequently it would be all for the better.

S. trout
Salmon trout begin to spawn about October 22, but do not spawn much until November 1.

Fill mesh, close season
If the mesh of the gill nets was enlarged, he would shorten the close season.

w. f. spawn close season
Whitefish spawn 2 weeks later than the trout. Cannot do much fishing in the upper lakes after November 30.

Whitefish will continue spawning as late as November 30.

The fishermen could not stand a close season of 6 weeks, from October 15 to November 30, if they were also obliged to use a coarser mesh.

If too much restraint is placed upon the fishermen, they will make more effort to evade the law.

The present close season during November will be better for both species, whitefish and trout, than any other arrangement.

A part of the trout may come in to spawn the latter part of October (beginning about the 22nd to 24th). These fish average about 4 1/2 pounds in weight, and differ somewhat from those that come in later. They spawn on honey comb bottom.

The trout, however, do not need as much protection as the whitefish. They have not decreased so much, are better able to take care of themselves, and are more easily propagated, the fry being more hardy, etc. The whitefish should be more protected, and the close season should certainly cover their spawning period to a greater extent than with the trout. The fry of the whitefish are more delicate, and the

restocking more difficult.

Trout fry
w. fry
He thinks that the fry of the trout especially should be held in ponds until the fall before they are released. He would do the same with the whitefish if possible, but the chances of keeping the fry alive are not so good.

Planting
Thinks the fry of the above species should not be planted where the pike, etc., can get at them readily, as in the Bay of Quinté. It would be better to select places where the fry would not encounter so many predaceous fishes. Out in the lake it would also be dangerous from the salmon trout, etc.

Salmon
Used to get sea salmon in large quantities in the Don, Credit, Tobico, Mimico and other rivers. They used to be numerous 40 to 50 years ago. A good many have been caught within 30 years, and scattering ones down to 4 or 5 years ago.